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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CORRELATES OF
GOVERNMENT CONTROL IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Anthony J. Russo, Jr.

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I Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between welfare and resistance in rural South Vietnam using empirical quantitative data.

When I undertook this study I held the view that the war in Vietnam was very much a class war -- a war between the rich and the poor, between the peasants and the city-bred. This is not to say that I felt that ambitions of the men in Hanoi were not important, or that communist ideology was not a factor; I felt, though, that these things were secondary and that the forces which sustained hostilities and increasing levels of violence came directly as a result of the enormous economic and social cleavages within Vietnamese society and the fact that these cleavages were highly related to the usual differences between urban and rural cultures. The government in Saigon was comprised of men who were richer, from urban backgrounds, had formal educations, and were highly influenced by the French colonial presence (Most had fought on the side of the French in the war against the Viet Minh.). The Viet Cong were peasants, had a strong Vietnamese identity, and had inherited the legacy of the Viet Minh.

Needless to say this view is not a universal one. In fact, a study by E.J. Mitchell claims to show that quite the opposite is true -- the richer peasants support the Viet Cong, not the poorer*. Mitchell presents a detailed statistical model to support his contention, showing a positive relationship between government control and a measure of inequality in the sizes of farms. He sees the results of his study as being something of a challenge to U.S. policy in Vietnam which he views as giving emphasis to economic reform. Actually, this is quite untrue; the U.S. has paid unprecedented lip service to the role of economic development and reform, but in practice has done little to promote it. The reason for this, most likely, is the inability of U.S. policy-makers to agree on the importance of development and reform**, and their persistence in viewing the conflict as one in which conventional military strategies (e.g., search and destroy operations and heavy reliance upon artillery and air power) are the only ones likely to provide substantial payoffs. In South Vietnam there has been

*Mitchell, E.J., "Inequality and Insurgency: A Statistical Study of South Vietnam," World Politics, April, 1968.

**"Land Reform in Vietnam," 20th Report by the Committee on Government Operations, House Report No. 1142, March 5, 1968. This report draws attention to differences among U.S. officials which have impeded progress in agrarian reform (p. 15). Generally, the report is critical of the lack of progress, but an anti-reform statement is appended to the report by dissenting members of the committee who use the Mitchell study to support their position (p. 19).

no major effort made to promote economic or social reform.

This study finds that geographic variations in rural income, farm sizes, and religion are highly correlated with geographic variations in the extent of control by the Saigon government (Saigon control is relatively high where rural income is relatively high.). The Mitchell paper is referred to frequently throughout because the findings shown here are in substantial conflict with it.

Standard multiple regression techniques comprise the principal statistical tools employed and two approaches are taken: one analyses variations in province aggregates of data (using 1960 province boundaries) and the other analyses variations in data on the hamlet level. Unfortunately, it was necessary to exclude the Central Highlands from the study because complete data were not available for that region; the analyses include the Central Lowlands (referred to hereafter as the Central region) and the areas referred to by the U.S. Government as III and IV Corps (referred to hereafter as the Southern region).

II Province Analysis

There are many ways to view inequality in distributions of welfare and more than a few indices available for quantifying the concept. Once we select a welfare measure, or measures, we can study the differences in the means, or the differences in the differences (the between-group variance of the within-group variances). There are 26 provinces in the principal areas of South Vietnam -- the Central and Southern regions -- and data are available for each. In this study the approach is to analyse variations in the Saigon Government's control from province to province in the context of variations in measures of welfare and record the degree to which they are related. The effects of religion and pure regional differences will also be accounted for. The Hoa Hao religion is important because the Hoa Hao, whose principal strength lies in 5 southern provinces (see table 1), exert a degree of local autonomy not seen in any other part of the country. Regional differences are important because the Central region (from and including Binh Thuan province northward to the 17th parallel) and the Southern region represent different levels of homogeneity; it is almost, but not quite, as though the two areas were two different countries. The Central region was settled long before the Southern region, experienced less

French influence, and has maintained a strong position with regard to traditional Vietnamese culture, customs, and habits. The Southern region, on the other hand, was settled more recently in history when the Vietnamese drove out the Cambodians (the Southern area was once part of the Khmer Kingdom) and French influence, later, was more profound with the French figuring heavily in shaping the economy of the region and its land tenure characteristics. Religious practices are also quite different; in the Southern region there are the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects, whereas, in the Central region there are no Hoa Hao and very few Cao Dai.

The hypotheses investigated are the following:

- (1) Saigon control increases (or decreases) in direct proportion to increases (or decreases) in measures of rural welfare.
- (2) Saigon control is higher in provinces with substantial percentages of Hoa Hao population and increases proportionately as the Hoa Hao population increases.
- (3) Relationships between control and welfare differ in the two Southern and Central regions with the relationship being stronger in the Central region.

Table 1

PROVINCE DATA MATRIX

Province	I Per Capita Income,**** Thousands of Piastres	L/Ls Ratio of Mean to Subsistence Land Hold- ing**	HH Percent- age Pop- ulation in Hoa Hao Religion***	g Gini Index of Inequality in Size of Land Hold- ings**	D _s Southern Dummy Variable	D _c Central Dummy Variable	C Percentage Hamlets Under Saigon Control (1965)*
An Giang	3.94	10.5	75	.62	1	0	75
An Xuyen	4.38	14.3	0	.44	1	0	27
Ba Xuyen	3.90	13.7	1	.60	1	0	24
Bien Hoa	4.75	4.6	0	.67	1	0	31
Binh Dinh	2.36	2.3	0	.38	0	1	9
Binh Duong	4.31	3.9	0	.54	1	0	18
Binh Thuan	2.90	4.6	0	.66	0	1	32
Dinh Tuong	6.33	7.6	0	.49	1	0	31
Khanh Hoa	3.34	4.2	0	.62	0	1	43
Kien Giang	4.40	9.6	1	.69	1	0	22
Kien Hoa	4.80	4.6	0	.57	1	0	24
Kien Phong	4.02	10.1	28	.60	1	0	42
Kien Tuong	5.17	14.3	26	.48	1	0	45
Long An	4.71	9.4	0	.42	1	0	32
Long Khanh	5.59	4.8	0	.55	1	0	25
Ninh Thuan	4.05	5.5	0	.74	0	1	76
Phong Dinh	3.87	8.3	10	.42	1	0	28
Phuoc Tuy	6.64	5.1	0	.69	1	0	52
Phu Yen	2.92	3.1	0	.59	0	1	13
Quang Nam	2.83	1.5	0	.40	0	1	18
Quang Ngai	2.22	2.4	0	.45	0	1	18
Quang Tri	3.32	1.5	0	.45	0	1	12
Tay Ninh	3.32	5.7	0	.41	1	0	22
Thua Thien	3.90	2.7	0	.50	0	1	33
Vinh Binh	4.53	9.3	0	.45	1	0	19
Vinh Long	5.96	5.9	20	.44	1	0	64
Regional Province Averages							
Southern	4.74	8.34	9.5	.53	-	-	34
Central	3.09	3.09	0	.53	-	-	28

*Control data are those used by Mitchell, op. cit.

** \bar{g} and \bar{L}/L_s were calculated from data given in "Report on the Agricultural Census of Vietnam," Department of Rural Affairs, Republic of Vietnam, 1961.

***Estimates of Hoa Hao population were taken from "The Religions of Vietnam in Faith and Fact," Southeast Asia Religious Project, Fleet Marine Force Pacific/IMAC (Forward), FPO San Francisco 96602

****Stroup, Robert H., "Rural Income and Expenditure Sample Survey: Preliminary Report," United States Agency for International Development, 1965.

The multiple regression model is as follows*:

$$(1) \hat{C} = -11.9 + 8.5 I + 16.4 D_c I - 37 D_c + .75 HH$$

(2.82) (2.50) (-1.55) (5.43)

$$\bar{R}^2 = .66 \qquad F = 13.0 \qquad N = 26$$

where

C = percentage of hamlets under Saigon control (data are taken from the Mitchell study)

I = estimates of per capita income, 1000's piastres (VN\$) per person

HH = estimated percentage of province population in the Hoa Hao religion

$D_c = 1$ for Central region
 $= 0$ for Southern region

Dummy variables are employed to test the hypothesis that the relationship between control (C) and income (I) is stronger in the Central region**.

For the Central region ($D_c = 1$) equation (1) becomes

$$(2) \hat{C} = -48.9 + 24.9 I$$

*The values shown in parentheses beneath the regression coefficients are t values (the ratio of the regression coefficient to its standard error). The higher the t value the more statistically significant is the regression coefficient.

**A good explanation of the use of dummy variables in this fashion is given in the following:
 Johnston, J., Econometric Methods, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963, p. 221-228.

For the Southern region ($D_c = 0$) equation (1) becomes

$$(3) \quad C = -11.9 + 8.5 I + .75 HH$$

Table 2 - Correlation matrix for province data

	C	I	\bar{L}/L_s	HH	g
C	1	.40	.28	.60	.45
I		1	.35	.08	.19
\bar{L}/L_s			1	.39	.05
HH				1	.10
g					1

The Hoa Hao term is dropped in equation (2) because there are no Hoa Hao in the Central region.

In other words, in the Central region, the percentage of hamlets under Saigon control increases 24.9 percent for each increase in rural per capita income of 1,000 piastres (5 to 10 U.S. dollars depending upon which exchange rates are used). In the Southern region, control increases 8.5 percent for each increase in per capita income of 1,000 piastres and .75 percent for each 1 percent increase in Hoa Hao population.

The three hypotheses stated above are strongly supported by the statistical analysis thus far. Data from only one year (1965) have been used, however, control patterns have not changed markedly over the course of the war. Areas of strong Viet Cong influence in the early years of the war remain strongly pro-Viet Cong. Also, as will be shown later in the hamlet analysis, 1967 control data show about the

same relationship with income.

\bar{R}^2 is the multiple correlation coefficient squared; its numerical value is equivalent to the percent of variance in the dependent variable that is said to be "explained". In the regression model shown in equation (1), 66% of the variance is explained. The remaining 34% of the variance which is unexplained may be attributable to error in the data or variables which have not been included in the model.

There are other measures of rural welfare besides that of income. Another variable which provides additional explanatory power in a model similar to equation (1) is the ratio of the mean size of a landholding (\bar{L}) to a "minimum subsistence" landholding (L_s). L_s is the amount of land required to provide an average Vietnamese family (5.3 persons) with a daily rice ration of 250 grams per person for one year; it reflects variations in rice yields across South Vietnam and ranges from .17 hectares in some provinces in the Mekong Delta to .40 hectares in Quang Tri -- the northernmost province. \bar{L}/L_s reflects the extent to which farmers are securely above the minimum subsistence level. When \bar{L}/L_s is added to the mix of independent variables shown in equation (1) it is found to be highly significant in the Central region and to have no effect in the Southern region;

we might expect this because \bar{L} is "contaminated" to a certain extent in the Southern region by the presence of very large holdings; this makes interpretation of \bar{L} uncertain because it is not clear how it reflects the sizes of family farms. In the Central region, however, \bar{L} is a clear reflection of sizes of family farms because there are virtually no large holdings.

The results of the regression analysis including \bar{L}/L_S are as follows*:

$$(4) \quad \hat{C} = -33.9 + 9.0 I + .76 HH + 10.9 \frac{\bar{L}}{L_S} - 10.9 \frac{\bar{L}}{L_S} D_S + 17.3 D_S$$

(4.51) (7.18) (5.43) (-5.13) (1.68)

$$\bar{R}^2 = .82 \quad F = 22.5 \quad N = 26$$

For the Central region ($D_S = 0$) equation (4) becomes

$$(5) \quad \hat{C} = -33.9 + 9.0 I + 10.9 \frac{\bar{L}}{L_S}$$

For the Southern region ($D_C = 1$) equation (4) becomes

$$(6) \quad \hat{C} = -16.6 + 9.0 I + .76 HH$$

Equation (4) is a significantly better predictor than equation (1). 82 percent of the variance is explained (compared to 66 percent in the first model) and the t values as well as the overall F value are much stronger. The difference between the two models

* D_S is used instead of D_C because it shows in a more straightforward fashion how the \bar{L}/L_S term drops out completely for the Southern region.

is apparent almost entirely in the equations for the Central region. Note how the equations for the Southern region -- (3) and (6) -- are virtually the same, whereas, the equations for the Central region -- (2) and (5) -- show that when \bar{L}/L_s is included it carries a share of explanatory power previously carried by income alone but it does a more precise job of it in that a higher multiple correlation is achieved.

It would make sense, in the first place, to add a land variable to an income welfare index in the Central region because land is more of an issue there; there are relatively more farmers, their holdings are much smaller and less fertile, and their aspirations for land, naturally, are much greater. The Stroup Survey gives an occupational breakdown for rural heads of household.* In addition to the farmer category there are merchants, peddlers, fishermen, clerical workers, laborers (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled), etc. In the Central region 65% were listed as farmers compared to 53% in the Southern region. Also, in the Central region, the average holding is .67 hectares compared to 1.71 hectares in the Southern region. The Stroup Survey also showed that when asked what they would buy with a hypothetical increase in income of 10,000 piastres per year, 37% of respondents replied

* Op. cit.

"buy land" in the Central region compared to 22% in the Southern region.

Having seen empirical support for the hypothesis that Saigon control is correlated with higher income and, in the Central region, larger family farms, we ask how this can be reconciled with Mitchell's finding of a positive correlation between his measure of inequality and control and his subsequent conclusion that the poor support Saigon more. Briefly, the answer lies in the fact that income and inequality are positively correlated, not negatively as Mitchell assumed.

In examining the question I have used the more standard measure of inequality: the Gini index* (see table 1). I find that the Gini index (g) is indeed correlated ($r = .45$, $N = 26$) with control (C), however, the strength of the correlation lies in the Central region. In the Southern region ($N = 17$) the correlation between C and g is $.17$ which is not statistically significant, however, in the Central region ($N = 9$) the correlation is $.80$ which is highly statistically significant. Thus, although there is a significant association between the two variables in the overall sense,

*For an explanation of the Gini index see, Russett, Bruce M., Trends in World Politics, The MacMillan Co., 1965, p. 117-121.

we can be misled if we do not examine the two regions separately. The strength of the relationship lies in the Central region and there g is highly correlated with income ($r = .57$) and \bar{L}/L_S ($r = .94$).

It was also found that the inequality index contributes nothing when put into the regression model shown in equation (4). The Gini index and the coefficient of variation were both tried in equation (4) and each turned out to be insignificant while coefficients and t values of the other variables remained essentially unchanged.

The analysis up to this point has been based upon patterns in variables which are provincial aggregates. In the next phase of the study we look at the situation at the hamlet level; as will be seen the results from the hamlet analysis are very similar to the provincial aggregate analysis in that income is a strong explanatory variable, and when combined with the regional dummy variable shows very similar patterns.

III Hamlet Analysis*

In this phase of the analysis we investigate the relationship between the degree of Saigon government control and per capita income at the hamlet level for a random sample of 94 hamlets. Hamlet data came from two sources: (1) the extent of Saigon control is represented by indices taken from the U.S. Government Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) reports of December, 1967, and (2) per capita income data are taken from information gathered in an income and expenditure survey conducted in the rural areas in 1964**. The HES data are subjective security ratings, supplied by local American advisors, on a scale which varies from 0 to 5 (0 means total uncontested Viet Cong control and 5 means total uncontested Saigon control); the data are compiled monthly for virtually all hamlets (approximately 13,000) in South Vietnam.

We are not concerned with the absolute levels of the hamlet ratings but rather their variation from hamlet to hamlet. Therefore, any bias in the ratings (positive or negative)

*Hamlets are the smallest jurisdictional areas in South Vietnam. Usually several hamlets make up one village and several villages make up one district. Provinces are composed of three to five districts.

**Stroup, Robert H., "Rural Income and Expenditure Sample Survey: Preliminary Report," United States Agency for International Development, 1965. The author is indebted to Professor Stroup for making available the entire set of raw data gathered in the survey (a total of 2,910 quite detailed household interviews).

is not likely to have substantial effects on the relationships uncovered so long as it is consistently high (or low); random errors in the security indices will simply make the relationships appear to be a little less strong (in a probabilistic sense) than they actually are.

The set of hamlets sampled for the economic survey in 1964 are a biased sample because interviewers were unable to gather data in areas under strong Viet Cong control. Strictly speaking, then, the relationships we uncover in the hamlet analysis apply to that hamlet population not strongly controlled by the Viet Cong in 1964. This is a meaningful population about which one can draw inferences, but the more interesting question is: To what extent is it possible to generalize the findings to all hamlets, i.e., the population of hamlets that would have been represented by a sample not biased by security conditions in 1964? There are no statistical tools, that I know of, that can provide an unequivocal answer. My feeling, however, is that the security bias in the sample does not seriously affect the relationships we find between Saigon control and per capita income; in fact, I feel it likely that the security bias weakens the relationships much the same as the correlation between two variables with a bivariate normal distribution tends to be diminished when the sample

points with the highest (or lowest) values of one of the variables are eliminated.

Unfortunately specific data were not available on hamlet religion or land fertility, therefore, it is not possible to use the same variables used in the province analysis.

The regression model is specified exactly like equation (1) in the province analysis, leaving out the Hoa Hao term for which we have no data. The results are as follows:

$$(7) \quad \hat{S} = 1.62 + .23 X + .49 XD_c - 1.44 D_c$$

(3.25) (2.41) (-1.98)

$$\bar{R}^2 = .25 \quad F = 10.1 \quad N = 94$$

where

S = hamlet security rating (December, 1967)

X = 1964 hamlet per capita income, 1000's piastres
per person

For the Central region ($D_c = 1$):

$$(8) \quad \hat{S} = .18 + .72 X$$

For the Southern region ($D_c = 0$):

$$(9) \quad \hat{S} = 1.62 + .23 X$$

In the Central region the hamlet security rating increases by .72 for each increase of 1,000 piastres in per capita income.

In the Southern region the relationship is weaker; the hamlet

security rating increases by .23 for each increase of 1,000 piastres in per capita income.

The important thing to note here is the similarity between equation (7) and equation (1); in both the province model and the hamlet model the income effect (in terms of the magnitudes of the regression coefficients) in the Central region is about three times what it is in the Southern region. This is illustrated more vividly by showing both equations (1) and (7) in non-dimensional form (i.e., expressing each variable in terms of its standard deviation).

Province Model

$$(10) \hat{U}_C = -.66 + .54 U_I + 1.05 U_{I D_C} - 2.05 D_C + .68 U_{HH}$$

Hamlet Model

$$(11) \hat{U}_S = 1.35 + .38 U_X + .80 U_{X D_C} - 1.2 D_C$$

The two models show a fair degree of similarity. The coefficients in the hamlet model are slightly weaker than in the province model and the fixed term is positive, whereas, in the province model it is negative. It is possible, and likely, that the security bias, discussed above, is responsible for the difference. A weakening of the relationship would tend to make the fixed term have a higher value, and in this case it does.

IV. General Comments and a Discussion of the Findings

The main conclusion of the study is that economic and social factors have been predominantly important in the struggle in South Vietnam. The variance in control patterns is explained extraordinarily well without taking into account military or strategic considerations and the basic relationship between control and income holds up whether we look at the situation in 1965 (as in the province analysis) or in 1967 (as in the hamlet analysis)*. Certainly there is error in the data and much of the unexplained variance has to be attributed to it. That leaves little variance unaccounted for and doesn't say much for the effectiveness of the vast amount of military resources that have been expended over the years.

We have not been concerned with the long-run underlying causes of the conflict in Vietnam, nor have we considered factors which precipitated hostilities. We have simply been concerned with the question of which areas are relatively weaker or stronger in support for one side or the other and the factors which explain the variance in intensity of support. There is little doubt that opposition to the various Saigon regimes

*Actually, there has been little change in the geographical pattern of Viet Cong control throughout the course of the war, although there may have been small local fluctuations, or variations in overall intensity such as the period of time immediately after the overthrow of the Diem regime in 1963, and after the 1968 Tet offensive. In both cases, the level of Viet Cong control seemed to use uniformly throughout the country.

manifests strong "class" overtones; class is placed in quotation marks because we do not see homogeneous groups either wholly for or against the Saigon government; we see, rather, a continuous spectrum ranging from poorer to richer areas.

The empirical relationships developed in this study probably reflect, also, the "cultural distance" between the urban, western-oriented Saigon regime and the rural, agricultural, and more traditional peasant. In contrast, however, one is hard put to find much of a "distance" between the Viet Cong and the peasants. And this does not mean necessarily that the Viet Cong are loved. The lack of cultural distance between the Viet Cong cadre and the peasants means, for example, that he has the same rough peasant features and wears the same faded, worn-out clothes as the latter. When he talks to them, whether they like what he says or not, they understand him and they understand what their role is with regard to the system he represents. They know how their behavior relates to the powers of rewards and punishments he possesses; he is capable of "honeyed talk", as it is often described by the peasants, or ruthless terrorism, and he usually has a specific reason for the use of either. On the other hand, the cadre who represents the Saigon government in the hamlet presents an entirely different image; his clean store-bought clothes and his smooth facial features betray his

class origins and, not always, but often, it is obvious that he is uncomfortable in his surroundings and just doesn't like the idea of having to be there. Just as the peasant doesn't necessarily love the Viet Cong cadre, he doesn't necessarily hate the city boy who represents Saigon. He may envy him, admire his status and wish that he could be like him, but there are two problems: (1) the peasant cannot relate to him on an emotional level, nor (2) can he see how his behavior relates to the authority pattern represented by the city boy; the consequence is that the peasant sees no role for himself in the system represented by the Saigon government. The Allies may dispense artillery and napalm, or economic aid and medical care, but the peasant sees no correlation between either one and his behavior. His choices are limited; the Viet Cong provide a role for him, but all too often the Saigon government provides indifference and uncertainty.

Since these conclusions are totally in conflict with Mitchell's findings it is useful to examine his work more closely.

One of his most prominent mistakes was to equate his measure of inequality with poverty*. This brings up a very important point; measures of inequality such as the one

*There are numerous other mistakes in his paper; principally, the regression model he reports contains terms which are not statistically significant although he reports them as being highly significant.

Mitchell used (and the Gini coefficient too for that matter) may be very useful if we are examining one group and want an index to summarize the degree of inequality. If we are comparing groups, however, we have to be careful. One group may have a low inequality index, but everyone could be equally poor. Another group may have a high degree of inequality, but the least well off in this group could still have an adequate living standard. For this reason we have to have absolute measures of welfare such as per capita income. (Although that too has its shortcomings, they are of a second-order nature compared to what is being discussed here.) This is precisely the trap into which Mitchell falls. Provinces where inequality (as measured by a single index) is highest are often the richest. We have shown in this study that the strength of Mitchell's relationship between Saigon control and inequality is positively correlated with per capita income and when per capita income and the Gini index (as well as the coefficient of variation) are put into the same regression equation, with Saigon control as the dependent variable, inequality is not significant.

After Mitchell reaches the conclusion that the richer peasants have spearheaded the resistance in Vietnam, he asks:

"In terms of human behavior, how is one to explain these findings? Part of the explanation may lie in the frequently mentioned docility and low aspirations of poorer peasants."* There is no doubt some truth in the general hypothesis that poorer peasants tend to be conservative and have low aspirations; however, one has to go much farther than that. If we simply stop there we miss the main point entirely and fail to understand much about the dynamics of Third World revolutions. The important point is that Mitchell stopped short of consideration of changes in aspirations brought on by agit/prop activities by the revolutionaries. When poverty exists in a society it becomes an issue at some point among certain elements of the elite, and at the point when members of this elite become revolutionaries a new process gets underway -- the process of agitation and propaganda and the business of the revolutionary agit/prop is to change aspirations in the poverty sector in order to recruit support for the cause of change. The revolutionary elite, often from the middle and upper economic classes, are well aware of the docility of poorer peasants and see this as one of the major barriers to be overcome in the initial stages of a movement. Thus it is misleading if we consider

*Op. Cit.

the poor peasants in an isolated way and ignore his interaction with the elite. Where there is no tradition of revolutionary agitation, the gap between aspirations and income, i.e., relative deprivation, may increase as we consider higher and higher income levels. But this is only one kind of relative deprivation. These aspirations are a function of standard of living. The aspirational component due to agit/prop activities is quite different and, in the end, we have to consider the combination of both. And there is still the question of which side the individual sees as being most likely to fulfill his aspirations. Overall aspirations are more likely to be solely a function of standard of living in cases where there is no tradition of revolutionary agitation, or where it has not yet grown to any significant proportions. In Vietnam it is well known that the Viet Cong emphasize the poor in their appeals for support and to a great extent they have a monopoly on access to the peasant. The Saigon regimes have suffered from a mix of maladies, one being a patronizing and contemptuous attitude toward peasants; this has precluded the formation of a working mass-elite relationship with the consequence that the authority structure is ill-defined; a functional role for rural elements does not really exist.

Saigon policy reflects their attitudes toward peasants; an illustration of this is seen in a statement by an ex-Viet Cong who had been a Party member in Kien Giang province and, for years, had worked as an NLF political cadre:*

"It would be hard to work for the government as a political worker because it requires degrees and diplomas. I think I am capable of doing psychological warfare, but I don't have the required educational background."

?
No { The Saigon government in the various forms it has taken since the departure of the French, has been a system in which participants are more conscious of upward loyalty than they are to responding to pressures from below. There is very little real viable contact between mass and elite. The Vietnamese peasant can perceive little relationship (other than a random one) between his behavior and the pattern of rewards and punishments meted out by representatives of the central government. On the other hand, a hallmark of the Viet Cong's relationship with the peasant has been a highly organized consistency shaping a pattern of persuasion and coercion in which the latter has no

W-L!

*RAND CORPORATION INTERVIEW AD-543. The Rand Corporation series of interviews with ex-Viet Cong has been made available for general use by serious scholars.

cultural-social info
Note: requires for actually
explaining a discriminatory
admin policy (Thompson, Wolf)

problem comprehending his role. In many ways the Viet Cong's exercise of power can be said to be more congruent with peasant modes of behavior than that of the Saigon government. The lack of "Vietnameseness" brought on by a Western orientation of the governmental elite and the presence of the Americans makes difficult the development of an authority pattern congruent with traditional ones. The central authority is, thus, caught in a situation where it is unable to compete with the Viet Cong for the resources of its citizens, nor, through political action, interdict the flow of resources from the villagers to the Viet Cong.

Thus, there are two components to the overall level of aspirations amongst the peasants: the increased level which comes as a result of revolutionary agit/prop activities, and that component whose intensity is roughly a function of the peasant's position on the standard-of-living scale. The process is a dynamic one in which the respective magnitudes of the two components change with time. It is reasonable to conjecture that the question of which side the peasant sees as fulfilling his aspirations is related to the comparative magnitudes of the two aspirations components. If there are poor peasants with high aspirations, the major component is likely to be the result of agit/prop activity and they are likely to believe that their

aspirations will be realized by support and cooperation with the revolutionaries. Where the other aspirations component predominates it is likely that the status quo is the preferable alternative.

In summary, the results of this study are in conflict with earlier work on the same subject which supported an anti-reform position as being the best strategy for the Saigon government. This study finds that, in the Southern region of South Vietnam, Saigon control is highest in areas where rural income is highest and where local autonomy, as in the Hoa Hao areas, is greatest. In the Central region, Saigon control is highest where income is highest, where the size of the average peasant's farm is greatest, and where land is most fertile. Analyses at two levels of aggregation (province and hamlet) were found to give similar results, and, in the province analysis, the socio-economic variables employed left so little unexplained variance in control that one wonders whether or not the military effort has had any relevance. The roots of the conflict appear to have been overwhelmingly political and socio-economic in nature.

! (or, other aspects of HH?)